

companies that were there when Saddam Hussein threw us out, and we basically had the whole country.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KAGEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KAGEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BRADY of Texas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HOLT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. REICHERT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SHIMKUS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REAL ENERGY SOLUTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that I'm able to be here today with my friend, Mr. SHIMKUS, and I think that he has some travel plans, so I'm going to immediately yield to him. And I can't wait to hear what he's got to say.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I'd like to thank my colleague from Georgia. And, you know, we're fortunate still, in today's high energy prices, to be able to use aviation. Aviation fuel is up. Budget airlines are broke, four of them so far. Baggage handlers are out of work. Ticket takers are out of work.

And part of the problem that America's facing is the high price of energy. And this is not a new debate that we've had since I've been here. And it's interesting how the votes have come down since 1994. And I think the public would really find them astonishing that on

almost every production bill, production means producing something, almost every production bill, whether it's Outer Continental Shelf, whether it's oil shale, whether it's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, whether it's coal-to-liquid technologies, Republicans vote 90 percent of the time in support of production, and my friends on the other side, the Democrats vote 90 percent of time in opposition to production.

So since we've had this fight for many, many years, almost decades now, it was Jimmy Carter who set aside the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil and gas exploration. It was President Bill Clinton who vetoed the ability to explore the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in 1995. Had he not done that, that oil would be here in our country today.

So now we find ourselves in a dilemma. It's Economics 101. It's supply and demand. Limited supply, increased demand, higher prices.

Here's the problem. January 2001, the price of a barrel of crude oil was \$23, just 7 years ago. When the new majority came in in January of 2006, the price of a barrel of crude oil was \$58.31. This was not acceptable. I didn't like this. That's why we passed, in between this time, the 2005 Energy and Policy Act. And on this floor, that bill had the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in it. Of course it went to the Senate and it went there to die. And they pulled ANWR out.

Today the problem has grown by exponential amounts. Today the price of a barrel of crude oil is \$136.39. So I'd like to keep this debate simple. This is a problem. So what is a solution?

And we're going to hear a lot, we've heard a lot of solutions from the other side. None of their solutions talk about bringing on more supply.

And we've had some great victories this week. FISA, Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, funding of the troops, no restrictions, GI bill expansion, great victories that came about through bipartisan compromise on this floor, bills that will get signed by the President. And we're all pretty pleased with the work we did this week.

We can do that with this. There is a congressional majority that would vote for more supply. There's only one hang up. It's the Speaker of the House will not let these bills on the floor.

So you have done a great job, and I used my 1 minute, Congressman WESTMORELAND, to sign your petition. And I want to challenge and encourage all my colleagues, in a bipartisan manner, to come down and sign this petition, this pledge. And I hope the constituents from all over the country ask their congressmen have they signed this pledge.

The pledge is pretty simple. I will vote to increase U.S. oil production and lower gas prices for America. And there I am, right there, just signed it.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. That's about as simple as it gets, isn't it?

Mr. SHIMKUS. It doesn't have to be. This is not a difficult process.

Now, since I signed the pledge, the question is how do we do this?

Well, we know how we do it. These red areas on this map is called the Outer Continental Shelf, OCS. You hear it talked about on this floor a lot. These areas, which is the West Coast, all the West Coast, all of the East Coast, and the eastern half of the Gulf of Mexico, are off limits, off limits. We can't research it, we can't investigate it, we definitely can't find and produce oil and gas. And we know there's billions of barrels of oil and trillions of cubic feet of natural gas, and we don't have access to it because of our policies in this, on this, in this building on an appropriation bill, not even an authorization bill.

And we're going to get a chance to get appropriation bills on the floor, and we're going to raise this issue when this bill comes to the floor, and we're going to challenge our friends on the other side to say, you know what? It's time. This is too much. We need to open up the OCS, the Outer Continental Shelf.

What's another solution?

Well, I live in the State of Illinois, and geologically, the State of Illinois is, if you go down far enough, it's a big, huge field of coal. It's called the Illinois Coal Basin. We have as much energy, BTU, British Thermal Units of energy as Saudi Arabia has of oil.

You hear my friends on the other side, they're worried about Iraq; they're worried about the Middle East; they're worried about our reliance on imported crude oil. You know, if we were in the OCS, if we were using our coal and turning it into liquid fuel, we wouldn't have to worry about the Middle East.

But since we are denied the opportunity to go into the Outer Continental Shelf, we have to have energy. It's their own policy that's forcing us to be involved in these international arenas. You know, I'd like to tell those folks, take a hike; we don't need you. And we have our own energy here.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. If I could just interrupt, claim back my time for just 1 minute in the fact that they want us to use alternative fuels. They want to go to alternative fuels and we do to. We think that is something that we need to be developing.

But this, what you're talking about the, the Outer Continental Shelf, the U.S. coal, the shale oil, those are things that we know we have. And the funny part about what they want us to do about using alternative fuels, there was section 526, if you'll remember, in a defense bill that said that the U.S. government could not use alternative fuels. So, you know, which is it? Do they want us to or not?

And so, you know, that's where we're caught, and that's what a lot of people, I think, to my friend in America, don't understand that we're getting a lot of conflicting things from the majority side right now.